

# School Readiness Program Request for Funding – Cycle 2

(Refining for Results)

## Part I: Background and Cycle 2 Policies and Application Guidelines

(Revised September 2006)





## **School Readiness Program Request for Funding**

Released February 2006  
Revised September 2006

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All First 5 Children and Families Commission (CCFC) Counties who have programs that have completed Cycle 1 may apply for this Request for Funding (RFF). This RFF is for Cycle 2, the next four-year funding cycle of the First 5 School Readiness (SR) Program. SR Cycle 1 Programs that end as of June 30, 2007 must respond to this RFF to continue funding without a break in service. Cycle 2 funds will be disbursed based on the State Fiscal Years (FY) (July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2011).

Cycle 2 County allocations are the same as Cycle 1, however the allocations of the 27 counties with the highest number of births will be adjusted to fund the Small County Augmentation Project (see Attachment 7). School Readiness funds are distributed on the basis of approved applications, budgets, maintenance of service levels, expenditures, and reports.

Counties will submit one budget per program. This allows each program to operate at a consistent level for each of the funded four years. At the conclusion of the four years, unspent funds will no longer be available to the County Commissions.

First 5 California staff along with County partners will conduct the application review process.

## **I. Application Submission Timeline**

<b>January 30, 2007</b>	Applications are due to First 5 California no later than 5:00 p.m. Note: Earlier submissions are encouraged.
<b>April 30, 2007</b>	Funding notifications disseminated to County Commissions
<b>July 1, 2007</b>	Cycle 2 program funding begins July 1, 2007 and ends June 30, 2011

*Note: 65 School Readiness Programs were approved and received Cycle 2 funding as of July 1, 2006.*

## **Format Instructions**

The County Commission must submit **one original and three copies** of the completed application for each applying SR Program to the address below no later than 5:00 p.m. on January 30, 2007:

First 5 California  
2389 Gateway Oaks, 2nd Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95833  
Attn: School Readiness Partnerships Office

Please adhere to the following formatting guidelines for submitted applications:  
Arial 12-point font, single-spaced, one-sided, 1-inch margins, and sequential page numbering.

## **II. School Readiness Program History**

The School Readiness (SR) Program is the centerpiece of First 5 California's work with children 0-5 and their families. A primary function of SR Programs is to coordinate the effective delivery of quality services and supports for California's youngest children and their families. The purpose of the SR Program is to improve the ability of families, schools, and communities to prepare children to enter school ready to succeed. In December 2001, First 5 California approved disbursement of the first (Cycle 1) matching funds to County Commissions. First 5 California funded a total of 206 local programs over a three-year period, with all 58 counties represented (Attachment 5). Several key elements form the foundation for this work as described below:

### **First 5 California's Principles on Equity (Attachment 2)**

1. Inclusive governance and participation of families and other caregivers of children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities.
2. Access to high quality and culturally competent early care and education/development opportunities for children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities.
3. Adherence to legislative and regulatory mandates pertinent to the provision of services to children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities.
4. Results-based accountability that includes well-defined and meaningful outcomes that benefit children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities.

### **National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) definition of school readiness revised for California School Readiness Programs (Attachment 3)**

1. Children's readiness for school
  - Physical wellbeing and motor development
  - Social and emotional development
  - Approaches to learning
  - Language development
  - Cognition and general knowledge
2. Schools' readiness for children
3. Family and community supports and services that contribute to children's readiness for school success

### **First 5 California Essential and Coordinated Elements of School Readiness (Attachment 4)**

1. Early Care and Education

2. Parenting/Family Support
3. Health and Social Services
4. School Capacity/Readiness
5. Infrastructure/Administration/Evaluation

Additional program background is available at  
<http://www.ccfcc.ca.gov/SchoolReady1.htm>.

## **Summary and Fiscal History**

Since 2001, First 5 SR Programs have provided a variety of direct services and supports for California's youngest children and their families, including early education programs with kindergarten transition activities, parenting education, health insurance enrollment and access to ongoing health care, oral health screening and treatment, comprehensive screenings, family literacy programs, and nutrition education and assessments. These programs reach out to parents and other family members, improve knowledge, skills, and capacity between child and family service providers, and increase infrastructure investments (e.g., improve safety and age appropriateness of facilities).

Preliminary results from the SR Program Evaluation show that programs are targeting the children who are most in need of services and supports in order to help them succeed when they enter school. Almost 60% of the children in target communities are English learners and 70% are from low-income households.

Data from the Kindergarten Entry Profiles (Fall 2004) supports continuance of SR Programs to children in the target communities so they have the support needed to succeed when they enter kindergarten. A sampling of the data is as follows:

- Children in very good and excellent health had higher mastery of important school readiness skills than children in poor or fair health.
- Children who participated regularly in early childhood education programs before attending kindergarten had significantly better mastery of key developmental competencies.
- Children whose families regularly engaged in literacy activities (reading, singing, or storytelling, three or more times per week) had significantly better mastery of developmental competencies at kindergarten entry.
- Parenting education and support services promoted activities that led to increased school readiness.

The amount of State SR funds available to each county for Cycle 2 is the same as Cycle 1, with adjustments for the Small County Augmentation Project, and shown in Attachment 7. State SR funds must be matched at least \$1: \$1 with local cash match funds.

Additionally, during Cycle 1 of the SR Program, counties received Implementation Funds to assist with local SR efforts with start-up costs, coordination staff, needs assessments, technical assistance, training, evaluation, and program costs. The amount of Implementation Funds each county received was based on the size of a county's SR allocation and ranged from \$25,000 to \$340,000 per year.

### **III. School Readiness Program - Cycle 2**

First 5's SR Programs are at a critical point for demonstrating results for the investment made by the state taxpayers. While we celebrate the accomplishments of all 58 County Commissions and their respective SR community partners, we are also interested in evaluation efforts that will prove the value of SR Programs.

This interest reinforces the need to refine established SR Programs with a focus on demonstrating positive results. Demonstrating results will meet evaluation expectations expressed by the State Commission and provide SR partners, legislators, taxpayers and other stakeholders with data needed to continue to make school readiness a priority for future funding decisions.

To assure positive results, both Evidence-based and Promising Practices are a requirement for all funded SR Programs. Because of the importance of long-term and outcome based evaluations, consistent implementation of these practices remains a major focus for Cycle 2. For the purposes of this RFF, Evidence-based Practices and Promising Practices are defined as follows:

- *Evidence-based Practices are clearly conceptualized, well defined, and are supported by empirical research that documents their effectiveness. These practices are supported by implementation studies, but may lack randomization and/or control groups as required by Scientifically Based Practices. Evidence-based Practices have been implemented, monitored, and evaluated to demonstrate effectiveness.*
- *Promising Practices have some evidence - anecdotal, case studies, etc., which consistently report effectiveness, but not enough evidence to sufficiently prove effectiveness. However, Promising Practices should also have been implemented, monitored, and evaluated.*

Attachment 10 of this document will assist applicants in identifying whether a practice is Scientifically based, Evidence-based, or a Promising Practice. A list of practices is not included in this RFF to allow counties to determine what type of practice they are locally implementing using the criteria given in Attachment 10.

#### **Maintenance of Effort**

To ensure long-term benefits, there must be "maintenance of effort" of SR services. Maintenance of effort means that County Commissions must continue their commitment to existing SR school communities. The number of children and families previously

served, as well as the amount and spectrum of services provided must continue. However, changes to an existing SR Program, to address any ineffective aspect or strategy, are strongly supported.

Each funded SR Program must assure that the Essential and Coordinated Elements are addressed. These are tailored for consistency with the new Statewide Evaluation and Annual Report.

The table below summarizes the relationship between the Essential and Coordinated SR Elements, the new Statewide Research and Evaluation Framework, and the Annual Report Result Areas.

<b>5 Essential and Coordinated SR Elements</b>	<b>First 5 State Evaluation Framework/Annual Report Result Areas</b>
1. Early Care and Education	Improved Child Development
2. Parenting/Family Support	Improved Family Functioning
3. Health and Social Services	Improved Health
4. School's Readiness for Children 5. Infrastructure, Administration, and Evaluation	Improved Systems of Care – each SR Program must report on School's Readiness for Children

### **Matching Funds**

County Commissions continue to be required to spend \$1 in local cash match for every \$1 of First 5 California funds (Attachment 7) within each fiscal year. Only funds serving children 0-5 and their families can be considered part of the required cash match. Acceptable sources of County Cash Match include: County Commission funds, dedicated expenditures by school districts and local public agencies specifically targeted to the SR Program, and funds from private sources such as foundations and businesses. The County Cash Match Funds must be auditable and traceable at the County Commission level as revenue received or by written agreement such as a memorandum of understanding (MOU), which lists services and financial commitment.

### **Request for Funding Guiding Policies**

SR Cycle 2 builds on Cycle 1 successes and requires that the following RFF Guiding Policies be met. Please review the ten guiding policies before beginning your application.

#### **RFF Guiding Policies** (See Attachment 1 for description)

1. Continued Emphasis on First 5 and School Readiness Fundamentals
2. Maintenance of Effort in Existing SR School Communities
3. Implementation of Evidence-based Practices

4. Full Participation in the Statewide Evaluation
5. Collaboration Among Local and State First 5 Programs and Projects
6. First 5 Financial Management Guide Compliance
7. Parameters for Use of County Coordination Funds
8. Implementation of the Small County Augmentation Project
9. Submission of Timely and Accurate Annual SR Program and Fiscal Reports
10. Reporting and Program Compliance with State Fiscal, Program, and Evaluation Policy

#### **IV. Request for Funding Application Components**

Please organize your application based on the components outlined below.

#### **School Readiness Program Cycle 2 Application Coversheet – Form 1**

##### **Cycle 1 Background Information**

##### **Background (maximum narrative of 2 pages)**

Please indicate:

- When your Cycle 1 SR Program was originally funded and became fully operational
- Three to five major strengths and challenges of your Program

Using a narrative or a chart:

- Summarize your current SR Program by Outcomes, Services, and Partners
- Indicate, by Service, how many children and families were served, including specific groups by ethnicity, language, age (e.g., 0-3 or 3-5), and special needs

##### **Cycle 2 Program Information**

##### **Needs Assessment Update (maximum narrative of 2 pages)**

If a needs assessment was completed, please provide the following information:

- The source and collection methods
- Family and community participation
- Highlight newly identified needs for Cycle 2

If a needs assessment was not completed, please provide an explanation.

##### **Cycle 2 Program Description Narrative (maximum narrative of 6 pages)**

- Describe the maintenance of effort and/or program modifications or expansion
- Describe collaboration with:
  - Other State First 5 funded programs (e.g., CARES, Oral Health)



- Other County First 5 funded programs
- Discuss how the Principles on Equity (Attachment 2) are integrated into your SR Program

## **Cycle 2 School Readiness Program Changes and Rationale by Result Area - Form 2**

All applicants must complete one form for each of the four result areas (a minimum of four forms required).

- Indicate any changes in services from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2.
- Provide a rationale for each change (e.g., to implement an evidence-based practice, to make program improvements in areas such as cultural and language competencies, address newly identified areas of needs, redesign services based on evaluation data, etc.).

## **School Readiness Program Summary (Logic Model) - Form 3**

See instructions found on Page 8 of the Forms Section.

Column C: Using the definitions and criteria of Evidence-based Practices and Promising Practices found on Page 6, in the Glossary (Attachment 9), and in Attachment 10, indicate if the practice listed is best defined as Scientific based, Evidenced-based or Promising. Please substantiate the use of all practices on a separate piece of paper (maximum of one page per practice).

## **Evaluation Design (maximum of 2 pages)**

Describe evaluation activities, including outcomes, indicators, data source, and identify staff and/or contractors involved in the implementation of all evaluation activities (refer to Form 3 and Attachment 6).

## **School Readiness Program Funding Sources and Amounts - Form 4**

SR Funding Source and Amount

- Maintains local cash match commitment from Cycle 1
- Meets local cash match requirement (minimum \$1: \$1)
- Provides fiscal information by state fiscal year (July 1 – June 30)
- Identifies funds to be provided by the County Commission (if applicable)
- Identifies funds to be provided by Funding Partners (if applicable)
- Identifies funds that go directly to/through the County Commission
- Identifies Small County Augmentation Project Funds (if applicable)
- Provides a total for all SR Funding
- Is mathematically correct

## **School Readiness Program Annual Budget by Expenditure Classification - Form 5 and Narrative**

- Provide fiscal information by state fiscal year (July 1 – June 30)
- Report information by identified expenditure classification
- Provide four budgets requesting four equal annual amounts of State funds
- Provide a detailed line item budget
- Provide a narrative description of how each budget line item amount was derived (No more than 2 pages)
- Is consistent with terms and definitions provided in the GFOA Financial Management Guide – found on the First 5 Association website at [http:// www.f5ac.org/mguide](http://www.f5ac.org/mguide).

## **County Coordination Funds Budget by Line Item – Form 6**

Maximum allocation can be found on Attachment 7.

## **Total Estimated Numbers to be Served Annually in Cycle 2 - Form 7**

This form will indicate the total numbers to be served by your entire SR Program annually.

*Note: For any service funded entirely by SR funds (State + local match), 100% of the participants will be counted. For any service partially funded by SR funds, only a corresponding proportion of the participants to the funding amount will be counted (e.g., If 60% SR and 40% other funding is used for a service, then only 60% of the participants are counted).*

- Indicate the number of children, families, parents/guardians, other family members, and providers to be served
- Indicate numbers to be served by ethnicity and primary language
- Indicate the number of children with special needs to be served

## **School Readiness Program Partner List - Form 8**

- Provide information for every partner referenced in the application
- Identify new partners (if applicable)
- Include MOUs/written collaborative agreements for all partners including financial commitments to provide local cash match funds (if applicable)

## **School Readiness Participating School(s) List - Form 9**

- Provide information for participating school(s)
- Identify new school(s) (if applicable)

- Attach MOUs/written agreements for participating school(s) and/or districts

### **School Readiness Directory Information / Program Profile - Form 10**

Complete as directed.

### **Small County Augmentation Project Certification - Form 11**

This only applies to the 27 counties with the highest number of births as identified in Attachment 7.

### **School Readiness Program Request for Cycle 2 County Coordination Funds - Form 12**

Maximum county allocation can be found on Attachment 7. If Option 1 was chosen on Form 11, subtract the amount of Small County Augmentation Project funds due from the maximum allocation.